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**BODY:**

GERALDO RIVERA, host:

I'm pleased now to welcome back two eloquent spokesmen for their respective causes. With me here in the studio, the Ambassador Alon Pinkas, Israel's Consul General to New York. The ambassador previously served as chief of staff or adviser to three Israeli foreign ministers and he has played an integral role in the Mideast peace negotiations. In Washington, we welcome back Hasan Abdel Rahman, the chief representative of the PLO and the **Palestinian National Authority** in the United States. He previously served as senior political adviser to the Palestinian delegation in peace talks and in various positions at the United Nations. So let me ask you, Mr. Rahman...

Ambassador HASAN ABDEL RAHMAN (Chief Palestinian Representative In US): Yes.

RIVERA: ...Ambassador Rahman, what do you think of Nusseibeh's statement there, that this is no longer a popular movement, that there needs to be a restart of the dialogue?

Amb. RAHMAN: Well, what I would say is the following, that no one is interested in violence. What we are interested in is to see Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and of the Palestinian people ending and we and the Israelis sign a peaceful agreement that will allow us to live side by side in peace. I believe that this is a general consensus among the Palestinian people. There's no problem with that. The only obstacle that we face is the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. That is the obstacle and I believe that Mr. Nusseibeh, who is a very good friend of mine, agrees with that.

RIVERA: Mr. Ambassador, will there be any meaningful movement, do you believe, as long as we are--the United States is waging this war against terror? Do you think you and the Palestinian side--do you think you and, you know, effectively he's an ambassador, Ambassador Rahman in--in--in DC. Do you think you'd ever sit down together and say, 'Hey, listen, we'll take Jerusalem up to that street, you take it up to that street. OK, we'll get the troops out of those settlements. We'll keep a couple there because there're religious people near Hebron or whatever.' Isn't--isn't that kind of dialogue possible? It doesn't seem as if there's any of that pragmatic, face-to-face, let's get this damn thing done kind of negotiating going on.

Ambassador ALON PINKAS (Israeli Consul General In New York): Well, Geraldo, is it possible? Yes. Am I hopeful? Yes. Can it happen...

RIVERA: Are you truly hopeful?

Amb. PINKAS: Yes. Can it happen in the foreseeable future? Yes. Unfortunately, Sari Nusseibeh is a minority. It took the--it took the Palestinians 53 years to get to Sari Nusseibeh. It took the Palestinian leadership a year's worth of--of--of violence to--to have Sari Nusseibeh voice what he had said and expound these--these ideas, which, unfortunately, I have to admit and I think that--that my colleague, Mr. Abdel Rahman, will admit, too--is a minority voice amongst the Palestinian leadership. And--and, you know, I'm listening to Mr. Abdel Rahman and--and--and I truly respect the cause that he's representing and I--and I know his heart is cut out for him. However, as the great American statesman Yogi Berra said, 'This is like deja vu all over again.' I--we have heard this since 1967. We have heard this in the '70s, in the '80s and most recently, we've heard these kind of arguments before Camp David in July of 2000. In July of 2000 at Camp David under the mentorship or sponsorship of then President Bill Clinton, we were ready to implement what Sari Nusseibeh is now lamenting that could have been achieved and should be achieved in the upcoming months. Unfortunately, while we were ready, the Palestinians never showed up.

Amb. RAHMAN: (From upcoming segment) I believe he is avoiding the issues. Here I am going to present a challenge to Mr. Pinkas, in front of you, Mr. Rivera, and on this network. Is Israel ready to withdraw from all the Palestinian territories that it occupied in 1967?

(Announcements)

Amb. RAHMAN: With all due respect to Ambassador Pinkas, I believe he is avoiding the issues. Here I am going to present a challenge to Mr. Pinkas, in front of you, Mr. Rivera, and on this network. Is Israel ready to withdraw from all the Palestinian territories that it occupied in 1967 in exchange for a just and lasting peace with the Palestinians, or what we hear from Mr. Pinkas is a pure public relations? There is a difference between accusing the Palestinians of this and that and they have waited for 53 years to listen to Mr. Nusseibeh. You know, Mr. Pinkas, that we signed with Israel an agreement on September 13th, 1993 on the South Lawn of the White House which stipulated that Israel wouldn't have a state within the borders of 1967 and Israel will end its occupation of the Palestinians. Today, nine years later, Israel is still occupying the Palestinians' territory, cities, denying the Palestinians very--their very basic human and political rights.

RIVERA: OK, let--let--let's let him respond, Mr.--Ambassador. Ambassador Pinkas, a challenge has been issued. Will Israel accept 1967 borders in exchange for a secure and lasting peace?

Amb. PINKAS: That--that--that's not a challenge. That--that's another in a series of games and antics that the Palestinians are playing. I can negotiate and--and--and virtually negotiate with Abdel Rahman until tomorrow, and we can reach an agreement. When it comes to real negotiations, the Palestinians have never showed up, have never demonstrated leadership, have never expressed statesmanship.

RIVERA: Example--give me one example.

Amb. PINKAS: Camp David is an example, but you won't--you know what? For the sake of your viewers, let's go back to basics. In 1947, the UN partitioned the land of Israel. The Palestinians rejected that. In 1948, they waged war against Israel. In 1967, Israel did not hold the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians, with the aid of the Syrians, the Jordanians and the Egyptians, waged war in Israel and again in 1973, and a terror campaign since. It took them 53 years to come to terms with the idea that Israel is there to stay, that--that the fact that Israel exists does not need to come at the expense of the Palestinians, that you need to come to terms with reality and you need to compromise because once 100 percent justice is impossible to--to achieve and to obtain.

RIVERA: All right, let--let me ask two questions. Ambassador Rahman, would you allow Jerusalem...

Amb. RAHMAN: Yes.

RIVERA: ...to be the capital of a s--of a guaranteed state of Israel? And would you, Ambassador Pinkas, end the settlements in the West Bank in what will be the Palestinian nation? You first, Ambassador Rahman.

Amb. RAHMAN: Mr. Rivera, I said to Mr. Pinkas, I'm speaking on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO. We are willing to accept a Palestinian state within the boundaries of 1967, over 22 percent of what was our homeland, in exchange for a permanent peace with Israel. Mr. Pinkas did not answer the question because...

Amb. PINKAS: I will.

Amb. RAHMAN: ...because you said you went into what happened in 1947. I have my narrative also of what happened in 1947. And I was in Camp David, Mr. Pinkas, and you were not there, and I know what we--what we were offered in Camp David and I know what we offered in exchange in Camp David. So let's not play games here. I am telling you that there's an international consensus. The boundaries of 1967 is the accepted boundaries for a permanent peace with Israel, as I said.

RIVERA: OK. We have to let Ambassador Pinkas respond before we...

Amb. RAHMAN: On the question of Jerusalem--let me just answer.

RIVERA: Quickly. Quickly.

Amb. RAHMAN: Jerusalem is two sides, east and west. We are willing to accept Israel with Jerusalem-- West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, East Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine. The two sides are open in one open city for everybody, Palestinian and Israelis. This is the challenge to Mr. Pinkas and for Israel.

RIVERA: OK. He heard you. Go.

Amb. PINKAS: All right. It's--it's very...

RIVERA: First of all, the settlements?

Amb. PINKAS: It's very simple. The settlement issue has been resolved at Camp David to the mutual satisfaction of Israelis and Palestinians.

Amb. RAHMAN: But you said we were not in Camp David.

Amb. PINKAS: I will tell you--I will tell you more than that.

RIVERA: OK.

Amb. PINKAS: In th--in this government, which is a different government from--from Barak's government that negotiated Camp David in good faith, as opposed to what Mr. Rahman said, this government has made a decision contained in its guidelines, not to expand settlements and not to build new settlements. So the settlement issue is not the issue. Now let me...

RIVERA: I'll have to have you guys back next week. I'm out of time again. But I think that there's a--we could--maybe we'll negotiate a peace here. I mean, I feel like Barbara Walters when she brought Sadat and Begin together. Maybe we'll negotiate something.

Amb. RAHMAN: He's...

Amb. PINKAS: Can I say--can I say--can I say something--can I say something about that...

RIVERA: Go ahead and talk until we're off the air. Go ahead.

Amb. PINKAS: ...very quick? Arafat is no Sadat, and I think that's clear to the entire world by now.

Amb. RAHMAN: I'm speaking on behalf of Yasir Arafat, and I'm authorized. Are you authorized to speak on behalf of the Israeli government?

Amb. PINKAS: Yes, I am authorized to speak on behalf of the Israeli government.

Amb. RAHMAN: Then let's--let's make the deal tonight.

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